

11-5-2018

News V. Study: The Facts: Discourse Communities

Hannah Huber

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/englfea>



Part of the [Discourse and Text Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Huber, Hannah, "News V. Study: The Facts: Discourse Communities" (2018). *Jessie O'Kelly Freshman Essay Award*. 2.
<https://scholarworks.uark.edu/englfea/2>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Jessie O'Kelly Freshman Essay Award by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact ccmiddle@uark.edu.

NEWS V. STUDY:
THE FACTS

5 November 2018

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

<i>Discourse Communities</i>	1
<i>Genres</i>	1
<i>Difference in Claims</i>	2
<i>Evidence</i>	2
<i>How to Accommodate</i>	3
<i>Values</i>	4
<i>What you need to know</i>	5
<i>Works Cited</i>	6

Special points of interest:

- What is a discourse community?
- How does language change when talking to different individuals?
- How can you identify the changes in discourse between communities?

DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

A discourse community can best be described as a group of people that all share a common form of communication through certain words and activities. Most people in life are included in multiple

discourse communities and, must learn a new set of slang when communicating amongst different groups. I am going to analyze the changes in dis-



course used in an article published by the *US Federal News Service* and the medical study it is based off of in the *New England Journal Of Medicine* to help others recognize the differences in the articles and how this can relate to an incoming college freshman.

GENRES

The genre for the accommodations article, the article from the *US Federal News Service*, is a short news article and the genre for the container article, the study from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, is a scientific research study. There is a genre shift between the original presentation of the scientists work and its polarization. A scientific research study would not be appropriate for the *US Federal News Service* to publish because the information is too dense, and the vocabulary is too advanced for the average reader. The average reader would be unable to comprehend the medical vocabulary and shorthand used in the research study.

DIFFERENCE IN CLAIMS

The claims are directly stated in the research study in a section that is specifically labeled “conclusion” whereas the claims in the news article are merely stated amongst the other information in the article. Both articles accurately state the claims, however the research study uses more accurate medical vocabulary pertaining to the topic. The scientists state the significance of their claims through data collected in their research, while the mass media reports state the significance through advantages of the system. When comparing the reports of significance between the two articles, the research article appears to be more factual with numbers and graphs, and the mass media reports are more contextual, and the facts are presented without scientific evidence.



EVIDENCE

When looking closely at the two documents, it is evident the accommodations article is attempting to summarize and more clearly state the findings of the scientific study. The scientific study briefly states in their background information that “There is increasing evidence that a closed-loop delivery system can improve glucose control in patients with type 1 diabetes” while the accommodations article tries to relay this same information in a way that gives even more background to the general public (Bally). The accommodations article states, “With increasing evidence that an artificial pancreas can improve glucose control in patients with type 1 diabetes, investigators had sought to see if it could also help patients with type 2 diabetes” (US Federal News Service). This is interesting in that it is understandably the same information, but one is more understandable to a different audience through specific word choice.

*“Artificial
pancreas controls
diabetes better than
standard insulin
therapy” (US
Federal News
Service)*

HOW THEY ACCOMMODATE FOR THE AVERAGE READER

Non-specialists are accommodated in the mass-media piece through a change in the vocabulary and tone. For example, in the research paper they specifically call the system a “closed loop insulin delivery system” which sounds more scientific and specific than the term “artificial pancreas” which is used in the mass-media article. The tone is also changed through the mass-media’s uses of quotes from an interviewer with a doctor from another university. The mass-media article frequently mentions the different researchers and universities involved in this study to build ethos with their audience. These changes were made in order to build a credibility with the audience, as well as making it more comprehensive for a general audience. It does not change the meaning of the original study, but rather sums the information and uses words that make more sense to the general public.

EXAMPLE OF DATA IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Table 1. Characteristics of the Patients at Baseline.*		
Characteristic	Closed-Loop Group (N=70)	Control Group (N=66)
Male sex — no. (%)	50 (71)	43 (65)
Age — yr	67.7±10.1	67.1±13.0
Body-mass index†	32.7±8.2	32.3±8.1
Glycated hemoglobin		
Percentage	8.1±1.9	8.0±1.9
Mean value — mmol/mol	65±21	64±21
Duration of diabetes — yr	17.1±11.2	15.5±11.2
Duration of insulin therapy — yr	10.0±9.1	8.0±9.1
Total daily insulin dose — U	64.2±59.4	50.6±38.9

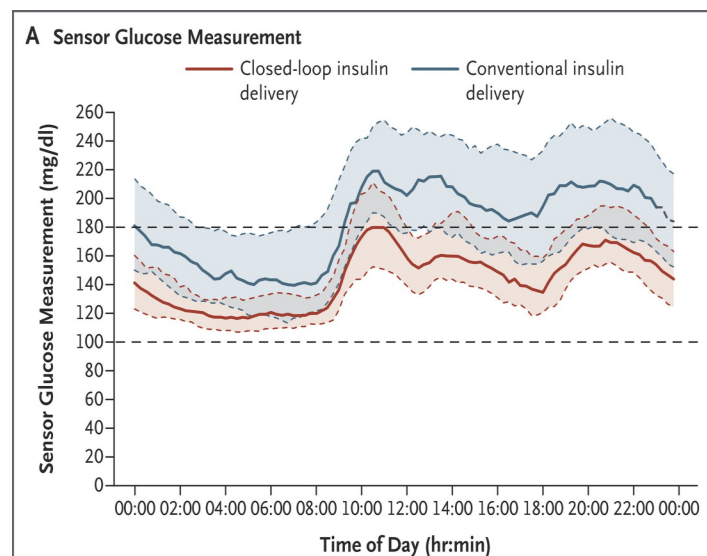
Statistical data from the study showing the characteristics of the patients

“Those who received insulin with a fully automated, closed-loop system had significantly better glucose control than those who received standard subcutaneous insulin therapy” (Bally)

ACCOMMODATION ADDITIONS

The accommodation article uses quotes from an interview conducted with a researcher from a university outside of the study. The man interviewed was not supported by the research study and is strictly stating his opinion of the study based on his background as an endocrinologist. This may have been included in the accommodation article because it provides an outsider’s opinion on the topic and his opinion is most likely unbiased by the study.

EXAMPLE OF DATA IN THE RESEARCH STUDY



This chart examines the differences in standard insulin delivery compared to closed loop insulin delivery within statistical range.

VALUES

The scientist's language in the research study shows the scientists value objectivity and the raw data. They are strictly focused on the experiment and the data collected in relation to how that affects patients. While they may be hopeful their data matches their hypothesis, they are more concerned with presenting their findings and statistics. The values suggested of the popular media's language seem to also want to present the findings of the study, however they are more concerned on relaying the information to the general public. The media reports relay the information using more pathos, but still specifically state the negatives that the system has yet to be approved by the FDA, to caution their audience.

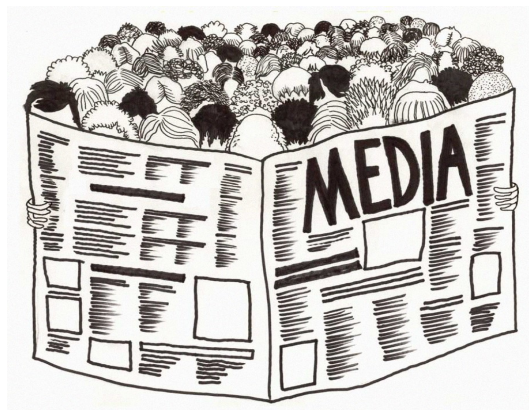
REFUTES

There is no evidence that the scientists tried to refute the claims accommodation. It appears the scientists succeeded in changing the perception of the claims made about their work, because there have not been any studies or articles to disprove their findings. While the subject still needs more research, it seems to have taken a step in the right direction in increasing diabetic patient care in hospitals. There have also been no refutes made by other scientist on this data. This may be because the research is still new and has only been published for about 4 months.

THE FAVORED FORM OF INFORMATION

The popular media seem to value the mass media articles. It seems they value this report over the original studies because the language used in the accommodations are easier to understand. Accommodations articles are written with the general public as the interlocutor and therefore work to cater to that audience. The original research reports are not necessarily written for the general public, but rather other researchers or doctors following that specific topic. Research reports state specific findings as they

are and, are not invested in trying to use vocabulary that is more appropriate for general audiences, rather they use vocabulary that is more accurate to the findings.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As explored through evidence in the articles used, it can be determined different groups of people, or communities, use a different kind of language among each other, whether it be through vocabulary, tone, or values within the group. These articles explore the differences in the medical research lingo and a language used for the general public, however the difference can be recognized amongst any group. It is important to recognize these differences because, coming into college you are preparing to enter a new discourse community. The vocabulary and tone used amongst peers will be very different from the form of communication with professors. Even, the reading and homework assignments will have a different sophistication compared to the readings high schoolers are used to. Recognizing this difference will allow you to use the most appropriate sources when researching and see how sources may develop bias. Although this may seem intimidating, with practice and good listening skills, the adjustment to the discourse in college life will come with ease.



Works Cited

- Bally, Lia Ph.D., Thabit, Hood Ph.D., Hartnell, Sara B.Sc., Anderegg, Eveline R.N., Ruan, Yue Ph.D., Wilinska, Malgorzata E. Ph.D., Evens, Mark L. M.D., Wertli, Maria M. Ph.D., Coll, Anthony P. M.B., B.S., Stettler, Christoph M.D., Hovorka, Roman Ph.D. "Closed-Loop Insulin Delivery for Glycemic Control in Noncritical Care | NEJM." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 9 Aug. 2018.
- "Study: Artificial Pancreas Controls Diabetes Better Than Standard Insulin Therapy." *US Fed News Service, Including US State News*, 3 Jul 2018.